1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20



***Property.***—The Tukuna apparently lack the concept of a rigidly delineated territorial zone as the tribal patrimony. They never protest against Neobrazilian usurpation of almost all the lands formerly at their disposal, nor do they squabble over boundaries with the Neobrazilians or with other tribes. In fact, the region is so immense and the population so scanty that difficulty over land rarely arises, as it may do when a *civilizado* forces an Indian to abandon his own plot because the land now belongs to the former or when sharpers extort "taxes" from the Indians inhabiting lands which never belonged to any civilized person.

Formerly the Tukuna were restricted to certain areas by the presence of neighboring tribes, some of them avowed enemies, like the Omágua and the Mayoruna. With the disappearance of this pressure the Tukuna began to spread out beyond their territorial limits, knowingly, but without any scruples.

A Tukuna will not quarrel with a Neobrazilian over land or over fish in the igarapé; even less will he quarrel with his tribesmen. As for land, he desires only that it be productive; it does not enter his mind to pass land on to his descendants, nor does he sell it as his own property. If his children move, they lay no claim even to the fruit trees their parents planted at the old site. Everywhere there are Tukuna taperas (abandoned, jungle-grown plantations) with numerous fruit trees. Who planted them and where the former owner is now living is well known, but once he abandons his property, anyone who so wishes may take possession.

A house is the property of the person who constructed it or ordered it built—usually the head of the family—who may abandon, sell, or give it away over the protests of other family members. The clearing belongs, not to the man who felled the trees, but to the woman who planted and weeded it, as we have seen in the discussion of divorce, though the entire family, if normally organized, benefits from its produce. In general, each person, even a child, is the owner of whatever he makes or of whatever is made for him.

***Inheritance.***—Objects used exclusively by men may not be inherited by women, and vice versa. When I asked an Indian, who had neither sons nor brothers, who would inherit his shotgun, he answered that it would belong to his son-in-law. If the couple should separate, he said, his daughter would keep the weapon and give it to her next husband; thus, the actual inheritor was the daughter. Normally, the legacy passes from father to son or, if there are no sons, to a brother, brothers-in-law being considered only if there are no sons or brothers. Correspondingly, daughters inherit their mother's property. I have never observed any disappointment or disagreement over inheritance, even when the objects were relatively valuable, such as firearms or a sewing machine.

## Chiefs

There is absolutely no political organization today. The Tukuna never had a supreme head, and a clan government could not obtain because the clans were not localized. But what they apparently did have until not too remote times were chiefs of local groups inhabiting the various igarapés tributary to the Solimões. These heads of large families possessed magical powers, intelligence, and ability to deal with strangers, especially with the *civilizados*. Owing to these qualities, they gained a limited ascendancy over fellow members of the group who would approach them

2: Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1948
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is unnecessary; a boy and girl may meet at a feast and leave married at the end. The wife's parents never renounce their authority over her and do not permit the husband to take her far away, which results in a certain matrilocal tendency. 584 [591] [593]

Polygyny even today is considered licit, but cases of bigamy are rare. In the only case known, a famous man who was both priest and chief had three sisters as wives simultaneously. Other cases of sororate have occurred. The levirate, also formerly frequent, was considered desirable. 595 587

Jealousy may cause violent quarrels between husband and wife, but never murder and rarely divorce. Adultery, though causing scenes, is insufficient reason for divorce. Guilt is always placed on the woman. The father's authority in the family is great. 593 586 684

In case of robbery, the offended party requires restitution and sometimes is extremely severe with the thief. 685

Injuries and death occur almost exclusively when people are drunk during a feast, for alcohol stimulates certain *Tucuna* to fight. Drunkenness absolves the murderer from responsibility, but the victim's relatives always feel resentful and hostile toward him. 672 733

A house is the property of its builder, i.e., the head of the family. The clearing belongs to the woman by whom it was made. 423

The *Tucuna* no longer have chiefs as they are too individualistic to accept authority and as the civilized people have discredited the office by designating chiefs through whom they could exploit and oppress the Indians. Formerly, chiefs of local groups were heads of large families whose magic powers, intelligence, and ability in dealing with foreigners gave them prestige. There was never, however, a chief for the entire nation. 622 178

**Death.**—Until the end of the past century, the deceased and all his ornaments were placed in a large chicha jar which was covered with a vessel, buried in a cemetery, and the site sometimes marked with a rod of muirapiranga. Well-liked people sometimes were buried in the house. They put a little food, beverage, and a fire on the grave, periodically renewing it. Tessmann (1930, p. 564) incorrectly attributed secondary burial to the *Tucuna*. 764 [114]

## WARFARE

The *Tucuna* are not warlike. They defended themselves against the *Omagua*, their principal enemies, and drove them to the banks of the Solimões River only when the latter had invaded their lands. They fought with arrows, poisoned spears, and round tapir-hide shields, and protected their paths with poisoned caltrops. They did not take prisoners or keep trophies from slain enemy. They never fought civilized people, except to avenge personal insults. 721 648 [411] [727]